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Agents cite crime link to arms plot

NEW ORLEANS (AP) — One of the nine men charged in an alleged plot aimed at overthrowing a foreign country, apparently Communist Cuba, was linked Monday by federal authorities to a member of a New York organized crime family.

The nine men, charged with conspiring to smuggle explosives from the United States to Mexico for future shipment to a third country, were arrested in various cities over the weekend after confiscation of more than $400,000 in munitions at Shreveport, La.

Murray Kessler of Brooklyn, N.Y., one of the nine, had business ties with Mannie Gambino, a member of the New York Carlo Gambino family, Michael Pollack of a Justice Department organized crime strike force, said here. The Gambinos have been identified as organized crime figures by federal authorities.

Pollack, who works in the Brooklyn office of the task force, was in New Orleans in connection with the munitions case.

He said Kessler was a partner with Gambino in Neptune Nuggets, a Long Island, N.Y., frozen food packaging firm.

Kessler, he said, also is awaiting trial on income tax evasion charges in New York.

Meanwhile, Trans World Airlines in New York confirmed that another of the nine men, Adler H. Seal of Baton Rouge, La., is a TWA pilot.

Charge made

Seal posted a $50,000 personal recognizance bond in New Orleans Monday afternoon and told newsmen: "I haven't done a thing. That's what you're going to find out."

U.S. Attorney Gerald Gallinghouse of New Orleans, who made the announcement of the arrests and confiscation Sunday, said that Kessler "knew and believed that this material would be used in an attempted overthrow of a foreign nation."

Gallinghouse said the federal government officials "have no reason to believe that the munitions were destined for any country other than Cuba."